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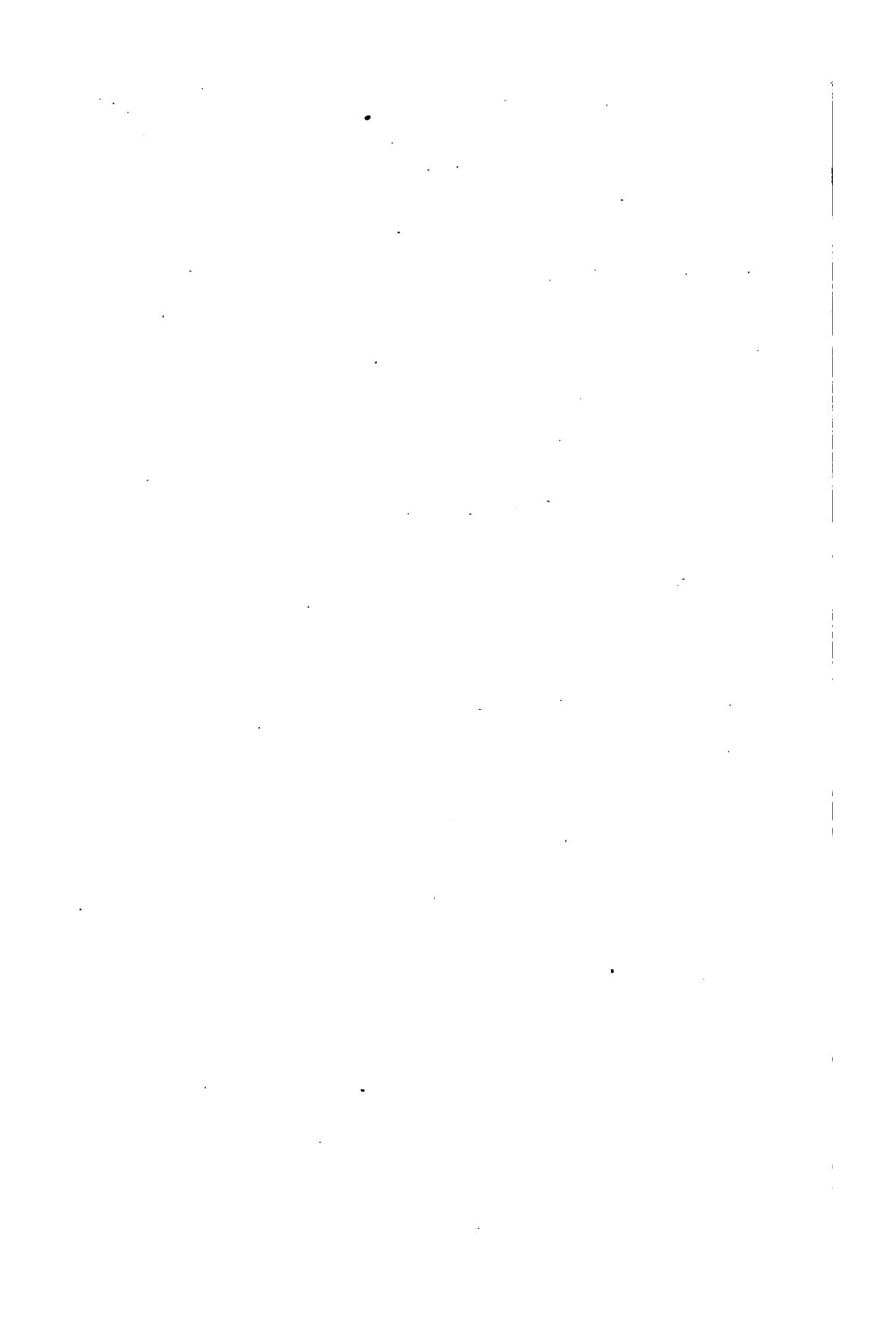






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THE
PROVINCE OF FAITH.

REMARKS ON THE METHOD OF DONATION
OF OBJECTIVE REALITY TO
SUBJECTIVE TRUTH.

Hulsean prize for 1865-6.

BY THE
REV. EDMUND G. WOOD, B.A.

ASSISTANT CURATE OF S. CLEMENT'S, CAMBRIDGE; LATE SCHOLAR OF
EMMANUEL COLLEGE.

*Yough Adelambr.
8.72*

"Deum potius ignorantia quam scientia attingi."—S. AUGUSTINE.

RIVINGTONS:
TRINITY STREET, CAMBRIDGE.
LONDON AND OXFORD.

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TO THE
MEMORY OF THE
MUNIFICENT AND PIOUS FOUNDER OF
THE HULSEAN BENEFACTIONS
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages of course purport to be no more than a mere sketch or outline of the argument on a subject of such wide extent and deep importance as that of the Province of Faith evidentially considered. A *treatise* is much needed, to place the entire question, in its philosophical aspect, in the position which it ought to occupy. As a humble contribution towards such a work, the author trusts hereafter, should God be pleased to spare him, to expand and develope the ideas he has here expressed, in comparison with the magnitude of the question, but too crudely and briefly, in an essay written of necessity under the pressure of other engagements.

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This Essay obtained the Hulsean Prize in the University of Cambridge for the year 1866—67.

*CLAUSES directed by the FOUNDER to be always prefixed to
the HULSEAN DISSERTATION.*

CLAUSES from the WILL of the Rev. JOHN HULSE, late of Elworth, in the County of Chester, clerk, deceased: dated the twenty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven; expressed in the words of the Testator, as he, in order to prevent mistakes, thought proper to draw and write the same himself, and directed that such clauses should every year be printed, to the intent that the several persons, whom it might concern and be of service to, might know that there were such special donations or endowments left for the encouragement of Piety and Learning, in an age so unfortunately addicted to Infidelity and Luxury, and that others might be invited to the like charitable, and, as he humbly hoped, seasonable and useful Benefactions.

He directs that certain rents and profits (now amounting to about a hundred pounds yearly) be paid to such learned and ingenious person, in the University of Cambridge, under the degree of Master of Arts, as shall compose, for that year, the best Dissertation, in the English language, on the Evidences in general, or on the

Prophecies or Miracles in particular, or any other particular Argument, whether the same be direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, in order to evince its truth and excellence ; the subject of which Dissertation shall be given out by the Vice-Chancellor, and the Masters of Trinity and Saint John's, his Trustees, or by some of them, on New Year's Day annually ; and that such Dissertation as shall be by them,* or any two of them, on Christmas Day annually, the best approved, be also printed, and the expense defrayed out of the Author's income under his Will, and the remainder given to him on Saint John the Evangelist's Day following ; and he who shall be so rewarded, shall not be admitted at any future time as a Candidate again in the same way, to the intent that others may be invited and encouraged to write on so sacred and sublime a subject.

He also desires, that immediately following the last of the clauses relating to the prize Dissertation, this invocation may be added : " May the Divine Blessing for ever go along with all my benefactions ; and may the Greatest and the Best of Beings, by his all-wise Providence and gracious influence, make the same effectual to His own glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures ! "

Subject proposed by the TRUSTEES for the Year 1866 :

The Province of Faith considered as an Evidence of the Being of God and His Government of the World.

• By the new Regulations, the four Divinity Professors were appointed as additional Adjudicators.

THE PROVINCE OF FAITH.

SECTION I.—*Introductory Remarks.*

“WHAT grounds have I for believing the existence of aught beyond the sphere of my own consciousness, or for submitting to control my will in accordance with laws and principles supposed to govern such an external world? and if none, have I then indeed any sufficient reason to assume the existence of an order of Being which *transcends* the sphere of my own Consciousness, that is, to believe in a Personal God, much less to impose on others a belief which may be a mere phantasm or self-modification of the Ego?”

Such are, reduced to a formal or scientific expression, some important questions, which occupy the minds of not a few of the present generation. Some indeed hastily assume the negative, but many others doubt in an honest spirit of inquiry—unquestionably far better, because evincing a desire of the truth, than an exterior acceptance of certain formulæ, if they exercise no influence on the moral being. There are not wanting plenty of indications, in what is called the Religious world, that men’s minds are thus stirred at the present day. There is abroad amongst us a certain earnestness of purpose, which makes men desire to cast off what they cannot see to be of value, whether in practice or in belief. It may be that the methods they

adopt are self-willed, the results they arrive at, intellectually shallow and morally unsound. Nevertheless, we must admit that an earnestness in seeking for something that they call truth, but about which they have perchance very shadowy conceptions, and a generosity which forbids their attempting to impose on others what they themselves hesitate to accept, are characteristics which are peculiarly exhibited at the present day, and which, as far as they go, are blameless, nay, praiseworthy.

The questions of the present day, though belonging to the same department of theology as those of a past generation and a past century, concern nevertheless different *aspects* of the Truth. Rationalistic rather than Sceptical, the *facts* of revelation are assumed in the more modern enquiries, while the supernatural element is attempted to be eliminated from the system founded on those facts. Questions of evidence—at least in the sense which Paley has caused us familiarly to attach to that term—have very much lost their interest. It is rather the Metaphysic of this department that now occupies attention. It is well that it should be so. Until we have at least come to some agreement as to first principles, it is useless disputing points of detail. This view was at once taken of the “Essays and Reviews” controversy by Dr. M'Cosh.* He saw that the whole question turned upon the point whether man’s being contains, or is affected by, more than one sphere, that of the Natural; or whether beside, above and enclosing this, there is another sphere, that of the Supernatural. According to the solution we arrive at we shall accept or reject the theory of the dual nature of the facts of Consciousness and Belief. We shall in the latter case maintain, that to reason and experience, as employed in investigating subject-matter strictly within their sphere, that is Phenomena, or the Conditioned, are we indebted for all we know, or have just grounds for believing. In the former case we

* See Preface to “The Natural and the Supernatural.”

shall conclude that, while reason and experience furnish us with the greater part of our information concerning the Conditioned, if not indeed with the whole of it, and cannot inform us aught concerning Noumena, the Unconditioned, save perhaps the fact of its existence,—there is another principle which assures us of facts and laws belonging to a sphere which transcends that of which reason and experience are the proper exponents. In other words, we shall maintain that Faith and Reason are co-ordinate instruments in evolving into our Consciousness those two factors which go to make up the sum total of all conceivable existence; factors whose co-relation is a point not of mere speculative, but of the highest practical interest to man. Once admit this principle, that Reason cannot and does not furnish the entire sum of our knowledge, (using that word in its loosest and widest sense), and many of the difficulties of subordinate questions vanish. Reject it, and discussion and argument are endless. It is futile to argue the question of the reasonableness of particular dogmas of Christianity, if we have left unsettled the first and main position, whether it be possible that man can be informed of the transcendental. On individual points it is quite possible that the arguments of the Rationalist* may be, *quoad* that special point, more cogent than those of his opponent. It is when, having grasped the truth of the duality alike of the subject-matter and of the instrument of knowledge, we view the position of Revelation, that is of Christianity, in its unity, not bit by bit, that we become convinced not only of the truth, but of the reasonableness, of the rationality of each point, each unit which goes to make up the complex whole. We see further then too that the Rationalist, in demanding on each point a strict demonstration of a rigidly logical nature, assuming only principles of Reason, is asking for what is incompatible with the con-

* In using this word 'Rationalist' we are anxious that it should be understood not as implying any opprobrium, but simply as expressing a fact.

ditions under which the subject can be apprehended. We are dealing confessedly with a subject whose essence is the Unconditioned ; and that not simply in the same way in which this may be predicated of every subject, namely, that the Phenomenon, which is the object of sense and the subject of reason, is underlain by the Noumenon ; but in a far nearer, more immediate, and, to speak popularly, practical sense. Here the Unconditioned is what we are practically concerned about. It may and does manifest itself through the Conditioned, otherwise we could not apprehend it. But what we desire to know is, how it affects us in our moral being ; what the facts and what the laws of its operation upon the sphere of conditioned existence, of which we ourselves are units. Hence we cannot obviously expect to apply successfully to each of those facts and each of those laws *individually*, processes of argument which are valid only with relation to the Conditioned. Logic is but a term for the science of the laws of evidence and method of argument, which are valid for a particular system of things. Each system must have its own special logic. And to apply to one system, or to the relations between one system and another, that logic which specially and properly relates to a distinct system is to commit a most evident impropriety. To illustrate this, we may conceive the whole actual existence of Being, the whole order of things, as a polygon* of many sides. To man, as he is now constituted, a certain limited number of these sides are within the view of his mental eye, that is are subject to his reason, and form for him the world or sphere of the Conditioned. These sides enter into and form certain combinations among themselves. As they are themselves limited in number, &c., the combinations which they form must also necessarily be limited. The investigations into the number and method of those combinations form the subject of man's operations of reason, under the rule which he

* Cf. Sir Wm. Hamilton's "Lectures on Metaphysics," vol. i.

has discovered among them as related to his reason, and which rule he calls Logic. His reason interpreted by this logic is adequate only to these special combinations. If then one or more of the remaining sides of our supposed polygon be by any means added to those already apprehended, the balance is disturbed. The number of combinations and their nature too (if we suppose these sides possessed of chemical as well as mechanical properties) is altered, and that logic, which before was valid as an exponent of the possibilities of combination, now leads into error, because it was but a reflex of the former state of things. A different interpreter is then manifestly needed to declare the possibilities and the validity of new combinations.

This is just the case with every doctrine of Christianity. Take for instance that which is the central doctrine of all, the great Mystery of the Incarnation. Here is a direct, an immediate contact, in new and distinct order, of the Unconditioned with the Conditioned. The Rationalist applies that method, which as regards his own being is valid enough, to the explanation of the being of Christ. He exclaims as the result of his analysis, "ECCE HOMO!" The humanity, the Conditioned, is all he sees; or if he does advance further, unconsciously led as *we* should say by another principle, and acknowledge the existence of something more than ordinary, more than even the nature of an Ideally perfect man, he does by his method but endeavour to condition the Infinite, to make God human. Difficulties which present themselves in the Christian doctrine he explains away or misinterprets, because he overlooks the duality of his subject. But apply the genuine method, Faith, and these difficulties, though the same as regards a strictly rationalistic treatment, become transparent, and appear in their true light as the necessary accompaniment of a revelation of the Unconditioned, practically, visibly united with, acting on, and modifying the Conditioned.

The object of these pages, then, will be to show how Faith is this genuine method whereby man is informed of the Being of God and of His government of the world. The actual fact of the duality of knowledge we shall to a great extent assume. But wherein Faith controls and guides Reason in investigating those matters which are above the sphere of Reason, what is the nature of Rational Faith, what the grounds on which it rests, and how far the representations it makes to us concerning the Infinite are real conceptions, figurate though they be, and therefore valid, not for one but for all,—these, and such like, will be questions which will come before us. But in the first place we shall consider briefly, what are the sources of our knowledge, and how it is possible that transcendental ideas can be validly represented or interpreted.

SECTION II.—*On Sources of Knowledge.*

LET us clearly understand what we mean when we speak of "the sources of our knowledge." By knowledge we understand the whole stock of our ideas, that is, of our mental concepts; whether they be concerning phenomena, or the laws governing the relations of phenomena—meaning by phenomena whatever form of Being the mind, under conditions or by representation, is capable of conceiving. We thus give to knowledge the widest possible signification, including under it not only our figurate conceptions concerning the Conditioned (*Vorstellungen*), but those conceptions which, necessarily figured in some manner to render them adequate to our powers of conception, we possess (how it matters not at present) concerning Pure Being (*Begriffe*). Hence, taking this definition of knowledge, it resolves itself into two elements: *first*, products of experience (using that word in its Lockian sense); *secondly*, what we will presume to call products of donation.

I. As to products of experience, these are further resolvable into (*α*) products of Sensation, (*β*) products of Pure Consciousness. Or, analyzing the ideas corresponding to these according to the Kantian arrangement (reversing our order), (*α*) gives us the forms of the Sensory; (*β*) gives 1. The ideas of the Pure Reason, 2. The Categories of the Understanding. The latter is the logical, the former the chronological arrangement. The materialist of course maintains that the whole stock of our knowledge comes through sensation. The necessity to think this know-

ledge under certain conditions, *e.g.* of space and time, he does not admit in the Kantian sense, that is as an innate or implanted necessity belonging specially to the nature of the mind itself, but rather as belonging to the order of external things ; laws of Phenomena, rather than laws of Pure Consciousness. Of course all are agreed that the pure elements of knowledge are potential only, not actual, until energized (the *δυνάμις* developed into *ἐνέργεια*) by the exhibition to consciousness, through the senses, of the presence of phenomena. This may be, and in the present order of nature no doubt is, the necessary method of consciousness becoming aware, not only of its own powers, but even of its own existence. But it is conceivable that consciousness, were it intended that its function should be the contemplation of *Begriffe*, would, without the exhibition of the sensational element, be capable of investigating the nature and the laws of Pure Being. Such is not its present function, though we know that hereafter it will be its deepest joy, its highest employment ; for then we are assured that we shall see and know God "as He is," that is in His Pure Being. Consequently we find that there are in the mind elements which are independent of sensation, though requiring its agency now to combine them into conceptions. Innate ideas there unquestionably are not in the mind, in the sense in which Locke used the word idea. There are few more striking instances of the confusion which arises from want of accurate definition, than the controversies which have been waged on this point. Locke and his disciples appear to have utterly misconceived the position of their adversaries, simply from his peculiar use of the word idea as an equivalent for conception. Vorstellung of course there cannot be without sensation, a conception cannot be figured to the mind without a model phenomenon from which to figure it ; but the basis on which the Vorstellung is conceived, this *may* be, and according to all but Lockian theorists *is*, existent as an

a priori element of knowledge, a product of Pure Consciousness; coeval, co-existent in fact, with consciousness itself. Any other theory but this must eventually degenerate into materialism. If the mind or consciousness be only receptive, a mere *tabula rasa*, as Locke said, and have not the power of deciding on the form in which phenomena shall be presented to it, or rather, to speak more accurately, of moulding the conceptions of phenomena under certain conditions,—albeit those conditions are a part of its own being, of which it cannot dispense itself, though they are of the nature of bonds; it is difficult to say how consciousness has any separate, any real existence of itself, or how its perceptions and its concepts differ from the strictly material perceptions of the senses. In fact, the modern theories which reduce psychology to a mere department of physiology (which have found their most able exponent in Mr. Bain), are the legitimate outcome of the doctrines of the sensational school of the eighteenth century. These theories reduce all thought to simple pulsations of brain matter; to a chemical question of the consumption or oxidation of a certain amount of phosphorus. All notion of the possibility of the mind conceiving of Pure Being is thus destroyed; nay, the very existence of *Begriffe* is rendered in the last degree improbable: at least as far as regards any practical bearing on ourselves it is rendered so. For we cannot conceive, nay, we seem even to have a right to deny, that it is possible, that matter pure and simple can embrace what is purely spiritual. And though even in such case we may suppose that the spiritual or Pure Being may be able, belonging to a higher sphere, to affect in some way pure matter—in other words, that the sphere of the supernatural should enclose the natural—yet such interference would be insensible to the latter; and the more probable hypothesis then would be, either that the natural was the only sphere of existence, or that, granting the existence of other, of transcendental spheres, these run

on in lines parallel to the former, leaving to man nothing either cognizable by him, or affecting him, but a bare material system.

We maintain then, in opposition to the sensualist and materialistic schools, that the mind has elements of knowledge, cognitions, other and distinguished from those which, derived from the external world, are furnished to it through the senses. That in fact consciousness is dual, consisting of the perception of the ego and the non-ego, and that the former is not simply a reflex of the latter, furnished from it, but an independent being, cognizable too independently of, albeit in contrast with, the latter. We are thus prepared to admit the possibility of the Mind conceiving, though not cognizing, the existence of Pure Being. On this question we shall have a few words to say presently.

II. The second element of knowledge we said consisted of facts &c. due to Donation, in contrast to those which arose from experience. As Logic informs us of the legitimacy of the latter, so does Faith of the former. Now this part of knowledge consists not only of the facts &c. which from accidental circumstances experience cannot inform us of, that is, of phenomena accidentally but not essentially excluded from its sphere; it consists also of all those conceptions which we have concerning the transcendental, about which experience is essentially incapable of granting us any information. Whether or no we are to include among these facts the existence of Pure Being, as the school of Kant, Sir Wm. Hamilton, and Prof. Mansel would affirm, and the Hegelians would deny, we certainly must include any laws of that existence, any modes of operation, &c., in fact, all but the simple *fact* of existence: this latter is all that the most enthusiastic transcendentalist of the most advanced German school would attempt to maintain. To put this statement in theological language, we should say that experience may possibly inform us

(though to the probability or certainty of this we do not at all commit ourselves) of the existence of God, and of the general fact that He governs the world ; but that as to the Nature of God, that is, as to His being a Trinity of Persons, in a unity of nature or substance, or as to the method by which He governs (using that word in its largest sense) His creatures, except that He does so on a general system of Rewards and Punishments ; this, man is necessarily incapable of discovering by experience. Some modern metaphysicians have indeed assumed a special intuition by which we are informed of God : this they have called "God-Consciousness." But this seems but a clumsy method of endeavouring to fill the gap left by Kant's ruthless criticism of the hollow and rotten arguments employed by the older Theists ; a gulf which he himself was content to span by a sort of temporary structure, the "Pure Practical Reason." It is sufficient to ask of such metaphysicians what ground they have for assuming any such intuition, save and except the necessity into which they have forced themselves by their own theorizing. They must show that the intuition is at once original, incapable of being resolved into anything else, and fundamental, leaning upon nothing else. "It may be further demanded that they explain the precise law, that is, the rule of the intuition's operation. Is it of the nature of an intellectual cognition, or is it a mere feeling, or is it a faith ? What in particular is the precise object which it perceives and which it reveals, and how much is revealed regarding that object ? Is God revealed as a being, or a person, or a substance ? Is He revealed as a power or a cause ? or is He revealed simply as a type ?" [This is all we conceive that such an intuition really could afford us, though the maintainers of this theory would, in their intense glorification of Natural Religion, seem to imply, if not, to state explicitly, far more.] "Is He revealed as a living God ? or as an infinite God ? or as a holy, that is a sin-hating God ?"—"If it be a partial or mutilated God

that is revealed,—say a bare abstraction without qualities, or a brute force, or a vague life or activity,—we are left, after all, to depend on other processes when we would clothe Him with perfections. If on the other hand it be a full-orbed light, shining in all the glory of wisdom and excellence and infinity, that is hung out in the firmament before the mental eye, the question will have to be answered, How have the great body of mankind come to see Him in such distorted shapes and in such dark and hideous colours?"*

The gulf which has been thus created, or rather which really exists, between our knowledge of the Natural and the Transcendental, Theology bridges by Faith. More properly, and speaking with all reverence, God has bridged it for man. Man may strive to span it for himself by the fiction of an intuition, or the frail and floating supports of the Practical Reason, but he has no solid foundation on which to rest; his structure is not anchored fast into both, or indeed into either side of the contrasted though really allied aspects of eternal truth. Deep down in that gulf, unfathomable by man, are united the two orders of things, *one* in their essential being, *diverse* in the outcome of their manifestation—the Noumena the same, the Phenomena contrasted. But God has given to man a secure basis on which he may tread the gulf, and see, though but yet "through a glass darkly," by means of Vorstellung, the realities which hereafter he shall see "face to face," Begriffe. For "all Faith is the gift of God," and thus it is that we have ventured to bestow upon this element of our knowledge the title of products of Donation.

* M'Cosh, "Intuitions of the Mind," p. 428, ed. 1860.

SECTION III.—*On à priori Proofs.*

THE four celebrated so-called proofs which have been given of the existence of God, are the Ontological, the Psychological, the Cosmological and the Physico-theological. The first, attributed to Anselm, is that which infers the necessary existence of a Supreme Being from the content of the notion in the mind, of an all-perfect existence ; it proceeds on the Cartesian principle that every clear and distinct idea represents a real objective Truth. Kant objected to this principle, that it is impossible that the mind can give more than subjective validity to its own conceptions ; and that to infer a corresponding objective validity, is much the same as though one were to infer from the clear mental conception of a certain sum of money, that one actually possessed that sum.

The second, or Psychological proof infers the existence of God from the fact of our possessing a conception of Infinity and All-perfect Being. This proof also, according to Kant, possesses only subjective validity.

The Cosmological proof infers from the fact of the existence of Being that an absolutely necessary Being exists. But then, in order to investigate the nature of this Being, it falls back on the same argument from mental conceptions that the Ontological proof is based on, and is consequently subject to the same objections.

The fourth, or Physico-Theological proof is the argument from design. It cannot be strictly called a proof of the existence of God, but rather of the superintendence of a Wise Artificer. Arrangement or organization is what

it touches, *not* Creation. The postulate this proof proceeds on is, that where there is evidence of design, there also there is evidence of a designer. All therefore that this proof effects is to show that Mind presided over the formation of organic unities; in this department, and to this extent, there is no doubt that the argument is a valid one, as there seems no reason to deny an objective validity to its fundamental postulate. But it cannot prove aught concerning Infinite and Absolute Being.*

The argument from analogy cannot be properly described as a proof in the intellectual meaning of the word. Indeed, its celebrated author does not appear to have intended it as such. Throughout the "Analogy" the greatest stress is laid upon the moral, rather than upon the intellectual effect of the argument. The entire design of the treatise was practical rather than speculative; its grand principle, that "Probability is the very guide of life," at once shows that it appeals, not to the Pure but to the Practical Reason; that its purpose is to guide men's actions in accordance with a practical certainty, rather than to satisfy the curious inquiries of speculative activity.

But the entire question of not only the validity, but even the possibility, of proofs of the existence and nature of God, has been met *in limine* by Sir Wm. Hamilton's enunciation so prominently, of the great principle of the Relativity of all Human Knowledge.

All human knowledge is of the relative and the conditioned: of things in themselves we can absolutely know nothing. The law by which Sir Wm. Hamilton expresses this fact he calls the Law of the Conditioned.† This law he enunciates thus: "The conceivable is in every relation bounded by the inconceivable. The Conditioned is that which is alone conceivable or cogitable; the Unconditioned, that which is inconceivable or in-

* Cf. Thompson's "Christian Theism," vol. i.

† "Lectures on Metaphysics," Lect. XXXVIII.

cogitable. The Conditioned, or the thinkable, lies between two extremes or poles; and these extremes or poles are each of them unconditioned, each of them inconceivable, each of them exclusive or contradictory of the other. Of these two repugnant opposites, the one is that of Unconditional or Absolute Limitation; the other, that of Unconditional or Infinite Illimitation. The one we may therefore call in general the Absolutely Unconditioned, the other the Infinitely Unconditioned; or more simply, the Absolute and the Infinite: the term absolute signifying that which is finished or complete, the term infinite that which cannot be terminated or concluded." As an illustration, consider Time. We cannot conceive either a commencement or a termination of Time, because it is the very condition of thought that it takes place in Time: "Goad imagination to the utmost, it still sinks paralyzed within the bounds of Time, and Time survives as the condition of the thought itself in which we annihilate the universe." But, on the other hand, we cannot conceive an infinite regress, or an infinite progress of Time; this could only be done by the infinite subtraction or addition in thought of finite portions of Time—a process which would require an Infinite Time for its performance. If we fancy we have accomplished this, it is but that we have substituted for the Infinite the Indefinite. We thus find ourselves unable either to affirm or deny a commencement to time, and yet time is perfectly conceivable, but it is bounded by the inconceivable, that is by the Absolute, as we cannot conceive its infinite regress; by the Infinite, as we cannot conceive its absolute commencement. The theological doctrine which Sir Wm. Hamilton deduces from this principle has, as is well known, raised against him and his disciples, especially Prof. Mansel, a storm of opposition. Into the details of the controversy between the latter and Mr. (now Professor) Maurice we cannot of course enter here. Suffice it to say that the doctrine of Sir Wm. Hamilton is briefly

this:—The very idea of God supposes Him to be both Absolute and Infinite. Absolute, because He is all-perfect, self-contained, self-complete; Infinite, because He is without beginning and without end, acting on and ruling all things throughout the universe. But the Absolute and the Infinite are precisely those two opposite inconceivables between which the thinkable lies. Hence it follows that the Infinite God cannot, in the present limitation of our faculties, be known, comprehended, conceived as-He-is, by our reason. We know God only according to the finitude of our present faculties; but we believe much that we are incompetent properly to know. Faith, belief, is the organ by which we apprehend what is beyond our knowledge. We may put this doctrine in another point of view. Man is compelled to think of everything under certain conditions, *e.g.* as bounded by space and as existing in time. Hence, if man thinks of God, that is, attempts to think of God, positively by a mere act of reason, he either is compelled to acknowledge his inability to do so by tacitly thinking of Him as conditioned, or else he finds that what he fancied was a positive conception, is nothing more than a negation of the thinkable. And this, because God is prior to space and time, which are creations of His own. And all thought as a product of the mind itself, or a reflection of the phenomena of the Natural, cannot be aught but a modification of our own consciousness, and therefore inferior to, inadequate to, incommensurate with, Deity; unless we maintain a Pantheistic theory of the identity of Human and Divine Consciousness! But it does not follow that because we cannot intellectually know God, except negatively, that therefore there is no other way in which we can know anything concerning Him. This would seem to be just the point which the opponents of the Hamiltonian doctrine have failed to appreciate. They seem to have used the word “know” in a different and more extended sense to that in which Sir Wm. Hamilton

used it. He restricted it to an intellectual operation; they seem to apply it to all of which by any method we possess certitude. If the word be used in the latter sense, he would certainly have said that we can and do know God, though still only imperfectly, and according to the measure of our faculties. This was precisely his point. Intellectually, we cannot positively know God; fiducially, we both can and do; though only as yet imperfectly, but nevertheless really, because the conceptions which He has given us concerning Himself are real and true, though figurate, conceptions of His Pure Being. If this be borne in mind, much of the difference between the Hamiltonians and their opponents is seen to be more apparent than real. The true effect of the doctrine is to shew the necessity of a Revelation, the high mission of Faith, and the importance of Dogmatic Truth.

But there is one school, or we should rather say one master, who, out of the polarity of Inconceivables, constructs the boldest *a priori* proof of the existence of God. Hegel, endeavouring to clear himself from the abstractions of the understanding, perceived that the conditions of a concrete are two opposites. These, considered as abstractions, are mutually exclusive, they are the elements whence Kant constructs his Antinomies and Amphibolies. For instance, as regards quantity, viewing it through the abstractions of the understanding, we find continuity one thing, discretion another; two mutually exclusive opposites. But Hegel, regarding not the abstract but the concrete, sees not in the one case a line unbroken, and in the other a series of dots, but, "to him continuity is not only impossible without discretion, and discretion is not only impossible without continuity, but discretion *is* continuity, and continuity *is* discretion. *We* see them abstractedly apart—the one independently of, different from the other: *he* sees them concretely together—the one dependent on, identical with the other. To Hegel it is obvious that

continuity *and* discretion, not either singly, but both together, constitute quantity,—that, in short, these are the constitutive moments or elements of the single, pure, abstract, yet in itself concrete, notion, quantity. If a *continuum* were not in itself discrete, it were no quantity; and nowhere in *rerum natura* can there be found any continuum that is not in itself discrete. Similarly, if a *discretum* were not in itself continuous, it were no quantity, and so on. In fact to the single notion quantity these two sub-notions are always necessary. It is impossible that there should be a How Much that were not as well continuous as discrete: it is the discretion that makes the continuity, and it is the continuity of discretion that makes quantity; or it is the continuity that makes the discretion, and it is the discretion of continuity that makes quantity. Quantity is a concrete of the two; they are indivisibly, inseparably together in it. Now every notion truly such, is just such disjunctive conjunct or conjunctive disjunct.* And so with regard to the Absolute and the Infinite. It is not with Hegel either the Absolute *or* the Infinite, but it is the Absolute *and* the Infinite. It is precisely these two opposite poles, which to other philosophers have been the Scylla and Charybdis of the particular notion, the contradictions which can, nay must, at all events negatively, that is, the one as the Absolute, the negation of its contrary Non-Absolute, be both predicated of the notion, which Hegel finds to be the proof of the concrete existence of the notion itself. What the abstractions of the understanding make a difficulty, that the logic of Hegel makes the proof. The philosophy of Hegel, certainly the most extraordinary achievement of unaided reason, thus furnishes the latest, and, as we believe, the grandest and most impregnable, of *a priori* proofs. If there be any objective validity in any argument, it must be found in this. We must remember too that it is the work of probably the only

* Stirling's "Secret of Hegel," vol. i., Preface.

man who has thoroughly and entirely taken in all that Kant can give, and who must therefore have fully mastered, and thoroughly appreciated, all Kant's objections to the objective validity of *a priori* proofs.* At the same time we must remember that the simple fact of the *existence* of God as Infinite and Absolute, is all that is proved. As to His nature and His attributes, *a priori* arguments can give no information that goes beyond the boundaries of probability. At this point it is that Revelation comes in, and faith as its interpreter and its coadjutor. We proceed therefore to the definition and description of Faith.

* It is much to be regretted that an eminent Oxford divine, a preacher of reputation, should have adopted so prejudiced a view of Hegel and his philosophy; seemingly regarding that system as necessarily inimical in the highest degree to Christianity. The reference to Hegel's theories as maintaining that 'pure being is pure nothing,' would really seem to betray an unquestionable want of knowledge of the Hegelian system. When will English writers cease to speak contemptuously of German philosophy and German thought?—(See a volume of *Oxford University Sermons* recently published.)

SECTION IV.—*The Objective Reality of the Supernatural.*

IF we want a definition of Faith, what more truly scientific one (to speak with all reverence) can we give than that of the inspired Apostle: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"—(ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων). Faith is the substance of things hoped for, because it gives objective validity to what we have subjectively conceived. It is the evidence of things not seen, because it assures us of the certainty of things transcendental, and gives us the only knowledge we possess, or can possess, concerning either the laws of the existence and action of the Supernatural, or of the effects of that order of Being upon the Natural. Things not seen, including not only what is hid from the bodily, but that too which the mental eye cannot discern, may be taken as standing for the Unconditioned. Faith, as we have already said, cannot be so rightly described as an Intuition of the Mind, as that it bears a similar relation to the order of the Supernatural, that Logic does to the Natural. In fact, we might say that Faith is the Logic of the Supernatural.

Faith may of course be distinguished under two heads, Faith-Rational and Faith-Devotional. Both of these, though in different ways, go to assure us of the validity of things not seen. The former represents the intellectual aspect and addresses itself to the understanding, while the latter acts on the feelings. The one we may say convinces, the other strengthens, the conviction.

Rational Faith no less than Devotional is the gift of God. It comes to a man *ab extra*, and by no unaided effort can be attained to. And here we must distinguish between the fact of a Revelation and the matter contained in it. When God vouchsafes to man the gift of a Revelation, He furnishes to him logical proofs of the validity of the Revelation itself. Proofs are afforded which appeal to the intellect to show that the Revelation is not an invention of man but a gift from God. For this purpose, not to substantiate the truths contained in the Revelation, some manifestation of the Supernatural has always accompanied the donation. These manifestations are so far logical proofs of the validity of the Revelation that they appeal to the intellect to say that the enunciator of the message has, for the time being, been invested with supra-ordinary powers ; and thus that the message he delivers belongs without question to the sphere of supra-sensual things. The argument may be put thus :—*A* announces that he is commissioned to deliver a message concerning the Supernatural.—*B*, to whom he addresses himself, says in reply, What evidence can you afford to my reason that you have aught to do with the sphere of Unconditioned existence, or even with an order of things conditioned otherwise than the Natural is ? If you can afford me no such evidence, how am I to know that your message is aught but a delusion of your own Consciousness.—*A* to this replies, I will prove to you that I am not left wholly unconnected with the Supernatural. I perform certain actions which seem to you to be a suspension of the law of Causation. They are not really so, but appear so to you, because you are only acquainted with a part of the whole order of things. You see then that I am connected in a supra-ordinary degree with the things of another sphere. Here then I show you a credential, a reason why you should listen to my message. If my acts show me to have a special power, you may reasonably conclude my

message to be valid. And here it is that Faith, Rational-Faith, steps in. Without that the man will not, cannot, receive as objectively valid the message sent him. There is an hiatus between the Logical proof of the supernatural mission of the prophet *A* and the Fiducial acceptance of the message. And it is this that constitutes the Province of Faith. Hence it is that Miracles are not strictly speaking evidential. They are credentials of the messenger, but not evidences of the truths of his message; evidences, that is, compelling *per se* the logical consent of the hearer. And this is precisely how it is that the most stupendous miracles, the most elaborate arguments, fall powerless to convince some men. We cannot here of course enter on the subject of Election; to do so would be out of place. But we must express our deep and thorough conviction of the inadequacy of all proof and of all argument to convince those to whom God has not been pleased to vouchsafe the gift of Faith. Those alone whom He has called, elected, can appreciate the validity of proof. Others, who are not elected, slip through the meshes of the net back into the depths of the ocean of doubt, and ignorance, and unbelief. We cannot moreover help feeling that the question of the Being and Government of God has been too much and too often argued as a mere question of philosophy, not as a great and vital and all-important matter concerning each individual, and that in the deepest and most personal manner conceivable. The author of the "Analogy" has indeed protested strongly against this, but Butler stands almost alone in so doing. The question cannot, if we would avoid looking at it in a one-sided, in a bare abstract manner, be separated from Personal Religion. But to go further into this point would be to enter on the whole most difficult subject of the Doctrines of Grace.

To return. We must carefully distinguish between the subjective and objective validity of any argument. We have already adverted to this in discussing the *a priori*

proofs. To kindle in the soul the objective reality of the Idea of God is the Province of Faith. The intellect may seek a transcendental knowledge, a speculative consciousness of the Idea, but in so doing it must observe the conditions under which the gracious revelation of objective validity is vouchsafed. Now the object of a revelation to fallen man is not to satisfy his intellect, but to convince him of sin, and to show by what means his nature may be raised, restored, ennobled. It is intended to act on the will. It is a revelation of the idea of Spiritual Integrity forcing and aiding the will, *ab extra*, to an integration with true Being. Now what we call God is the Idea of Absolute Spiritual Integrity contemplated objectively. This is in entire opposition to the essentially subjective theories of Pantheism. They pretend to little, if any, influence on the will. But Christian Philosophy starts with this assumption, that the will of man, being depraved, requires to be integrated with the true spiritual perfection, that is, with the Divine Will. If then we recognise God as the Idea of Absolute Spiritual Integrity, inasmuch and in as far as we find ourselves actuated by His operance and indwelling presence, it is evident that what is commonly called the proof of the existence of God is demonstrative* (*δεικτικῶς*),

* This is not without parallel even in the Physical Sciences. The Laws of Motion or the Law of Universal Gravitation are incapable of strict logical proof. The most we can say is that they hold in every case to which we have as yet been able to apply them, and so we say we demonstrate their validity. But for a time the same might have been said, in the case for instance of the Lunar theory, in favour of the system of Epicycles. They appeared valid until fresh observation showed the existence of hitherto unknown inequalities. And now so far are we from being in a position to *prove* the Law of Gravitation, that it is quite conceivable that fresh astronomical discoveries may compel us to modify what is valid *for us* at present, that is as far as we are able to demonstrate it. Indeed such seemed likely enough to be the case prior to the discovery of the cause of the perturbation of Uranus. The demonstration even was imperfect till the telescope of Gall revealed the unknown planet. *This*, the result, of course, of Adams and Le Verrier's calculations, demonstrated that the Law still held, but these calculations did not do so. They pointed out an hypothesis, neither of the nature, *per se*, of a demonstration nor of a proof.

and not the result of logical reasoning* This serves to explain the failure of the so-called proofs. Demonstrations there undoubtedly can be validly constructed. But their order though logically before belief is chronologically posterior to it. And this exactly because all belief in, all knowledge of God is moral first, then intellectual. To know God, even imperfectly, we must feel His quickening power, and this implies conscience. Man only realizes the Idea, and only knows, yet certainly knows, the Idea by its agency on and in himself, and so far as he is actuated by it, as the spiritual ground in which he lives and moves and has his being.†

Devotional Faith we have said strengthens and confirms the conviction implanted in the mind by Rational Faith. And this is so, because the fundamentum, or rather condition, of the possession of the one as well as the other, is a deep and abiding sense of sin, and of the necessity man is under of obtaining objective assistance. An earnest and hearty endeavour to serve God in His own appointed ways—deep sorrow and contrition for sin—self-denial—meditation—prayer—fastings—diligent use of all the means of grace, these are the methods by which men's belief is strengthened more surely, more effectually, than by the study of volumes of evidences, or the construction of thousands of proofs. It is a perpetual law of spiritual being that “to him that hath shall more be given, and he shall have abundantly.” Faith generates faith, and multiplies and intensifies in proportion to its growth the certitude of the things it has apprehended. And this brings us to another point.

Faith is as much the possession of the ignorant as of the learned, of the young as of the old. Now we could never

* For some of the above remarks I am indebted to Mr. Green's posthumous work, “Spiritual Philosophy,” vol. ii. p. 32 et seq.—I do not however commit myself to his intuitional theories.

† Green, vol. ii. p. 50.

have imagined that for one class of men there should be a rigid system of philosophical proofs, while the rest of mankind should be dependent on their word for their knowledge of God—the millions dependent on the units. The very notion jars at once with all our ideas of the fitness of things. Men cannot act on that of which they have no certitude. Moral action can only ensue on a basis of practical and well ascertained belief. Hence the gift of Faith to enable all men to know the truths which must underlie their practice. “Faith being a Divine gift, is mightier than human reason. We may often not be able ourselves to develope in words the grounds or the strength of our convictions. We may be tempted to be vexed or disquieted in ourselves, because words of God which stamp the Faith upon our souls, seem to another unconvincing ; or because truths which to us are as our own souls, and are inwrought into our very souls, and are a part of them, seem to others as ‘idle tales, and they believe them not.’ The grounds of Faith are often the more difficult to be produced in detail, even because Faith is a Divine gift. The very deepest principles of Faith are often those which can least be analysed. Faith was anterior to reasoning, it is more comprehensive than reasoning ; it outlives reasoning. It is a centre to which all reasoning converges, which countless lines of reasoning intersect ; but itself contains them all, and is contained by none. The distinctive colours into which Faith’s primal light can be resolved, may be counted ; but its piercing light and kindling glow are not in the resolved ray. Faith has a direct power over the soul, and speaks to it, and is heard by it, because it is from God.”*

But whatever may be said as to the evidential power of Faith as regards the pure Theistic argument, there can be but little question as to its essential necessity as regards

* Pusey’s “Two Sermons on Faith.” Oxford, 1855.

the government of the world. Under this term, we of course include all those mysteries and means by which God has wrought, and still effects, the salvation of mankind. Take for instance one of these mysteries, and the foundation of all the means, the great mystery of the Incarnation. This is the great central pivot on which turns the whole of God's government. "He hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Is not this mystery beyond, above, out of the scope of reason? Could any *a priori* reasoning have discovered that the Unconditioned should have taken unto Himself the Conditioned? Can reason, even *a posteriori*, discover how the "Word was made flesh"? Even when revelation has informed us that the mystery of the Incarnation consists in the union of two natures, divine and human, in one adorable Person, and Faith has convinced us of the truth of the wondrous proposition, we still cannot understand the How. A clear conception we may indeed possess both of person and of nature, but *how* two natures can be united in one person, reason cannot explain. Much less could she ever have discovered the method by which God would choose to elevate humanity. So again, reason might conclude that the perpetual failings of humanity necessitated a perpetual means by which the fallen individual might be raised—it would also conclude that these means must be supplied *ab extra*. It might possibly conclude that there must be something supernatural in these means. But the actual fact that the means provided should unite us continually to God through the communication of the sacred humanity of a Divine person, who should be possessed of both natures, who should be "God *and* man," *this*, reason could never have ascertained. In fact, that on which all our hopes depend, that without which all our *a priori* arguments would be but a conviction of ourselves, an attainment (if even that were possible) to a knowledge of a Being whom we could not obey, that, *viz.* the Incarnation and its great results,

its method of application to ourselves, the Sacramental System, that, reason never could have enounced; though Faith at once, though at first imperfectly, apprehends, though now it cannot comprehend the mystery—"Faith alone shows true hearts the mystery." This is a part of the subject of God's government of the world, though indeed it is the very centre, that from which all else radiates, that has been much overlooked in arguments regarding that subject. This is the great central fact of the world's history, and to the neglect of this fact, to the want of giving it its due prominence in treatises on the Evidences of Christianity, must be ascribed much of the prevailing Pantheism of the day. That system which degrades God down to the level of His own creatures under the notion of exalting *them*, is the result of reason attempting to construct a system for the alleviation of human infirmity. It is the exact converse of the doctrine of the Incarnation. It sees so far, as we said before, that Deity and humanity, or the natural and the supernatural, the conditioned and the unconditioned, must be brought in contact; that the whole order of existence cannot be perfect without this union—but how? This is where reason fails, this is where Pantheism errs. Faith tells us that it is by God taking unto Himself human nature. Pantheism says by God being not only everywhere and ruling everything, but by everything being God. But even so, reason fails practically to tell us how this contact is to avail, how in our daily life it is to support us, how, except in a dream of Deity, we are in any way ennobled by the theory which it has advanced.

No! Faith, and Faith alone, can give us a certainty which shall sustain at once the ignorant and the learned, and which, in moments of doubt and difficulty, in moments when action is imperative, and argument has no place, when the feelings are stirred, and the heart yearns for something else than self, and conscience loudly proclaims

the imperative of the Moral Law, can then sustain and guide and strengthen us. Reason and argument might avail (we do not say they would) in the calm retreat of the study; but Faith must be our handmaid amid the toil and the weariness of daily duties and anxieties and temptations. Faith alone can be our defence and mainstay on the battle-field of Life; Faith in an ever present, guiding, sustaining Personal God—a God who, the source and the sanction of every moral obligation, is and must be to us an objective imperative Reality given by Faith under the law of Love, not a subjective dream of individual consciousness.

Conclusion.

THE Province of Faith then, in the argument as to the Existence of God and His Government of the World, we have contended, is to give objective validity to those intellectual conceptions, which subjectively are certain, but whose objective validity cannot be otherwise asserted or maintained. Beyond this it furnishes us with Vorstellung (Figurate Conceptions) of the world of Pure Being ; conceptions which as they are afforded to us, *ab extra*, by Him who knows and comprehends Pure Being far, infinitely more perfectly than we can comprehend Conditioned Existence, because He Himself and alone *is* Pure Being, are therefore objectively valid not to one only but to all, because He sees them to be adequate representations FOR US, adequate that is to our mental powers, of His Being and of the mysteries wherewith He surrounds us, and whereby He elevates us. This could not be so if Reason or Consciousness had conceived these representations, these concepts ; they could then be only subjectively valid, and if we were to attempt to enforce their acceptance on others we should be justly obnoxious to the charge of bigotry and intolerance, because we could not be objectively certain of the adequacy of the representation to the subject-matter. This is the true answer to be made to those who object to the imposition of dogmatic truth as an intolerable yoke, because they say that the conception which one man has of the Unconditioned or the Supernatural cannot certainly be predicated as representing the same reality to another. True, perfectly true, if Reason were our only guide ; but

God has given to us Faith ; and the concepts, the Vorstellungen, which Faith furnishes us, God Himself has created ; they have been figured by, and have issued from the eternal consciousness, and we cannot, we dare not reject them, lest haply we be found, in our opposition to dogmatic verities, to fight against our God. From such presumption may God of His mercy defend us !

J. W. B. G.

